VERSES

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The SECOND EDITION.

[Price One Shilling.]

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R. Sheridan

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SPOKEN AS

A MONODY,

AT

The Theatre Royal in Drury-Lane.

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LONDON:

Published by T. EVANS, in the Strand; J. WILKIE, St. Paul's Church-Yard; E. and C. DILLY, in the Poultry; A. PORTAL, opposite the New Church; and J. ALMON, Piccadilly.

M, DCC, LXXIX.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
COUNTESS SPENCER,

Whose APPROBATION and ESTEEM were JUSTLY CONSIDERED by

Mr. GARRICK

AS THE HIGHEST PANEGYRICK
HIS TALENTS OR CONDUCT COULD ACQUIRE,
THIS IMPERFECT TRIBUTE TO HIS

MEMORY

IS, WITH GREAT DEFERENCE, INSCRIBED
BY HER LADYSHIP's
MOST OBEDIENT
HUMBLE SERVANT,
RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN.

MARCH 25th, 1779.

IF dying EXCELLENCE deſerves a Tear,
If fond Remembrance ſtill is cheriſhed here,
Can we perſiſt to bid your Sorrows flow
For fabled Suffe'rers, and deluſive Woe?
Or with quaint Smiles diſmiſs the plaintive Strain,
Point the quick Jeſt—indulge the Comic Vein—
Ere yet to buried ROSCIUS we aſſign—
One kind Regret—one tributary Line!

His Fame requires we act a tenderer Part:—
His MEMORY claims the Tear you gave his ART!

The

The general Voice, the Meed of mournful Verſe,
The ſplendid Sorrows that adorned his Hearſe,
The Throng that mourn'd as their dead Favourite paſs'd,
The grac'd Reſpect that claim'd him to the laſt,
While SHAKESPEAR's Image from its hallow'd Baſe,
Seem'd to preſcribe the Grave, and point the Place,—
Nor theſe,—nor all the ſad Regrets that flow
From fond Fidelity's domeſtic Woe,—
So much are GARRICK's Praiſe—ſo much his DUE—
As on this Spot—One Tear beſtow'd by YOU.

Amid the Arts which ſeek ingenuous Fame,
OUR toil attempts the moſt precarious Claim!
TO HIM, whoſe mimic Pencil wins the Prize,
Obedient Fame immortal Wreaths ſupplies:

Whate'er

Whate'er of Wonder REYNOLDS now may raiſe,
RAPHAEL ſtill boaſts cotemporary Praiſe:
Each dazling Light, and gaudier Bloom ſubdu'd,
With undiminiſh'd Awe His Works are view'd:
E'en Beauty's Portrait wears a ſofter Prime,
Touch'd by the tender Hand of mellowing Time.

The patient SCULPTOR owns an humbler Part,
A ruder Toil, and more mechanic Art;
Content with ſlow and timorous Stroke to trace
The lingering Line, and mould the tardy Grace:
But once atchieved—tho' barbarous Wreck o'erthrow
The ſacred Fane, and lay its Glories low,
Yet ſhall the ſculptur'd Ruin riſe to Day,
Grac'd by Defect, and worſhip'd in Decay;

The' enduring Record bears the Artiſt's Name,
Demands his Honors, and aſſerts his Fame.

Superior Hopes the POET's Boſom fire,—
O proud Diſtinction of the ſacred Lyre!—
Wide as the' inſpiring PHOEBUS darts his Ray,
Diffuſive Splendor gilds his VOTARY's Lay.
Whether the Song Heroic Woes rehearſe,
With Epic Grandeur, and the Pomp of Verſe;
Or, fondly gay, with unambitious Guile
Attempt no Prize but favouring Beauty's Smile;
Or bear dejected to the lonely Grove
The ſoft Deſpair of unprevailing Love,—
Whate'er the Theme—thro' every Age and Clime
Congenial Paſſions meet the' according Rhyme;

The Pride of Glory—Pity's Sigh ſincere—
Youth's earlieſt Bluſh—and Beauty's Virgin Tear.

Such is THEIR Meed—THEIR Honors thus ſecure,
Whoſe Arts yield Objects, and whoſe Works endure.
The ACTOR only, ſhrinks from Times Award;
Feeble Tradition is HIS Memory's Guard;
By whoſe faint Breath his Merits muſt abide,
Unvouch'd by Proof—to Subſtance unallied!
Ev'n matchleſs GARRICK's Art to Heav'n reſign'd,
No fix'd Effect, no Model leaves behind!

The GRACE of ACTION—the adapted MIEN
Faithful as Nature to the varied Scene;

Th' EXPRESSIVE GLANCE—whoſe ſubtle Comment draws
Entranc'd Attention, and a mute Applauſe;
GESTURE that marks, with Force and Feeling fraught,
A Senſe in Silence, and a Will in Thought;
HARMONIOUS SPEECH, whoſe pure and liquid Tone
Gives Verſe a Muſic, ſcarce confeſs'd its own;
As Light from Gems, aſſumes a brighter Ray
And cloathed with Orient Hues, tranſcends the Day!—
PASSION's wild Break—and FROWN that awes the Senſe,
And every CHARM of gentler ELOQUENCE—
All periſhable!—like the' Electric Fire
But ſtrike the Frame—and as they ſtrike expire;
Incenſe too pure a bodied Flame to bear,
It's Fragrance charms the Senſe, and blends with Air.

WHERE then—while ſunk in cold Decay he lies,
And pale Eclipſe for ever veils thoſe Eyes!—
WHERE is the bleſt Memorial that enſures
Our GARRICK's Fame?—whoſe is the Truſt?—'tis YOURS.

And O! by every Charm his Art eſſay'd
To ſooth your Cares!—by every Grief allay'd!
By the huſh'd Wonder which his Accents drew!
By his laſt parting Tear, repaid by you!
By all thoſe Thoughts, which many a diſtant Night,
Shall mark his Memory with a ſad Delight!—
Still in your Heart's dear Record bear his Name;
Cheriſh the keen Regret that lifts his Fame;
To YOU it is bequeath'd, aſſert the Truſt,
And to his WORTH—'tis all you can—be JUST.

What more is due from ſanctifying Time,
To chearful WIT, and many a favour'd RHYME,
O'er his grac'd Urn ſhall bloom, a deathleſs Wreath,
Whoſe bloſſom'd Sweets ſhall deck the Maſk beneath.
For theſe,—when SCULPTURE's votive Toil ſhall rear
The due Memorial of a Loſs ſo dear!—
O lovlieſt Mourner, Gentle MUSE! be thine
The pleaſing Woe to guard the laurell'd Shrine.
As FANCY, oft by Superſtition led
To roam the Manſions of the ſainted Dead,
Has view'd, by ſhadowy Eve's unfaithful Gloom,
A weeping Cherub on a Martyr's Tomb—
So thou, ſweet MUSE, hang o'er HIS ſculptur'd Bier,
With patient Woe, that loves the lingering Tear;

With

With Thoughts that mourn—nor yet deſire Relief,
With meek Regret, and fond enduring Grief;
With Looks that ſpeak—He never ſhall return!—
Chilling thy tender Boſom claſp his Urn;
And with ſoft Sighs diſperſe the' irreverend Duſt,
Which TIME may ſtrew upon his ſacred Buſt.

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With Thoughts that mourn—nor yet desire Relief,
With meek Regret, and fond enduring Grief;
With Looks that speak—He never shall return!—
Chilling thy tender Bosom ere'p his Urn;
And with fell Sighs disperse the' reverend Dust,
Which Time may strew upon his sacred Bust.